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Nathan Carter

Lunar Slip-Away-Bi-Ways, Lady Gardeners and the Curvy Cutie Peacock Division

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Imagined Encounters! Three floating sculptural way-finding projections of circuitous astral pathways and curvaceous silky ribbon beelines. These schemes are adorned with hanging moons, femme forms, flower petals, antennae feathers and street shrapnel, elemental episodic points of interest for the purpose of guiding deviant inquisitive creatures towards a queer sub-space crypt world where non-binary channel surfing signal pirates rendezvous at a precarious ultramarine blue and pink palace disguised as a fancy bird. Spinning the subversion dials in search of punk anthems & booty-bangers they are affectionate with one another, fluid, and pan-romantic and they like to change outfits a lot while cultivating venomous sharp edges in anticipation of danger and toxic fuckery.

– Nathan Carter, March 2022

Casey Kaplan is pleased to present a solo project by Nathan Carter in our physical and online viewing rooms. *Lunar Slip-Away-Bi-Ways, Lady Gardeners and the Curvy Cutie Peacock Division* includes a series of three hanging sculptures termed “radio region reflectors,” along with a single pedestal-based object. The reflectors act as signal-beacons, guiding us through constellations, astral planes and fictional worlds of cut metals contained by steel armatures.

Suspended off the wall, Carter’s sculptures read as drawings in space. Through an improvised yet intentional handling of material, shapes are cut with a free and forgiving hand. This fluidity reorients the workings of the hand and reflects a commitment to untethering tradition. A constant flow of stimulation informs Carter’s practice, ranging from dystopian literature and neo noir dirty future cinema to queer core punk, Weimar erotica and a recent photographic collaboration inspired by Christer Strömholm and Pierre Molinier. This collapse of references coupled with the artist’s studio practice subverts linear understandings of recent and past histories. A sense of timelessness ensues.

Networks of organic forms are suspended within a paradigm of Carter’s creation. Rose-colored fragments conjure undulating flowers and corporeal curves. Hung with thin steel wires, individual components faintly sway like windswept “kiss” kites stuck in the wires of a utility telecommunications pole, perverting the electronic signal. Generated with equal degrees of impulse and precision, the gestural application of acrylic enamel akin to gold leaf further accentuates each idiosyncratic form.

Brass sheets cut into crescents and circles of varying scales are enmeshed within a web. Metal fragments are painted with a brilliant blue enamel resulting in an episodic echo contained within a steel galaxy. In an homage to the galactic landscape, unearthly forms undulate through both the motion of the brass and the curved lines of the frame. Like the moon’s influences on tidal currents, there is a rhythmic movement contained in the spaces where brass and steel meet. The “slip-away-bi-way” refers to futuristic way-stations / sci-fi rest-stops that emerged alongside Italy’s expressways in the middle of the 20th century. Metal fragments cyclically intersect like automobiles on a never-ending voyage.

Fierce jagged-edged sheets of cut brass, aluminum and copper are paired with convivial floral-toned surfaces. Affixed to the frame with wire, these metals appear to float in space alongside coins, rings and found materials. In the sculpture’s center hangs a piece of brass from which a quarter falls. The empty spaces between the elements are equally significant to the work’s charge. Cascading materials collapse on top of pre-constructed divisions like the “touch-me-not” flower, whose petals fold inward and droop when touched or disturbed, protecting themselves from harm, and re-opening a little while later.

An inviting sculpture rests unaccompanied on a pedestal like the peculiar nests built by a Bowerbird, constructed for the purposes of attracting a mate. Here, the stainless-steel wire exists not as all-encompassing armature, but as individual gestures to which painted wood and metal components are fashioned. The palate and compositional format directly reference a peacock, a creature known for its eye-catching flamboyance. And yet, this abstract sculpture better describes the bird’s imaginary path, flowing through and around a boundless ecosystem.